Turning first to a formal matter, it is respectfully requested for the Examiner to indicate consideration of the art cited in the Information Disclosure Statement dated September 23, 2002.

Turning to the Office Action, the objection lodged against Claim 32 has been attended to by amendment.

Claims 25 and 45 to 53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In respect of the rejection of Claims 25 and 53, Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion that these claims are directed to both an apparatus and a method of using the apparatus. These claims are very clearly directed to a fiber body, and they define the fiber body both in terms of structure and in terms of steps by which the structure is obtained. Claims defined in this format have long been accepted by the Patent Office, and are akin in many ways to product-by-process claims. The claims are not, however, directed to an apparatus and a method for using the apparatus, and withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

As for Claim 45, the claim does not state that the hydrophobic group is oriented toward itself, as otherwise asserted in the Office Action. Rather, the claim very clearly specifies that the hydrophobic group is oriented toward the "surface of the hydorphobic group", which has a well-understood meaning clear to those of ordinary skill in the art. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 25 is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his indication of allowable subject matter, and acknowledge the allowance of Claims 2 to 6, 32 and 33. Claims 25 and 45 to 53 were

indicated as allowable if the rejections under § 112 were overcome. In view of the foregoing discussion, it is believed that the rejection under § 112 should be withdrawn and that these claims should be indicated as allowable.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent 4,940,542 (Simizu). In response, Applicants have focused on the Examiner's reasons for allowance, and have amended Claim 1 so as to specify a construction formed of first and second portions, the first portion having an olefin resin at a fiber surface thereof with the olefin resin having a hydrophilic group, and the second portion having a group of which interfacial energy is lower than that of the hydrophilic group and almost the same as the surface energy of the fiber surface. Withdrawal of the § 102(b) rejection of Claim 1 is therefore respectfully requested.

REQUEST FOR REJOINDER

Pursuant to MPEP § 809, et seq. and 821 et. seq., Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of certain ones of the withdrawn claims.

Specifically, it is respectfully requested to rejoin Claims 7 to 9, since each of these claims depend from allowable ones of Claims 2 through 6. It is further respectfully requested to rejoin Claim 62, which includes the subject matter of allowable Claim 53, plus additional features. Thus, Claim 53 is generic to Claim 62 such that Claim 62 is fully embraced by an allowed generic claim.

It is therefore respectfully requested to rejoin Claims 7 to 9 and 62.

CONCLUSION

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 32622

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A negative pressure producing fiber body for use in a container for containing a liquid, which is to be supplied to a liquid ejecting head for ejecting the liquid for recording, in a manner that allows the liquid to be supplied, comprising;

a first portion having an olefin resin at least on [the] a fiber surface thereof, said olefin resin having a [lyophilic] hydrophilic group; and [in an oriented state on the surface thereof]

a second portion having a group of which interfacial energy is lower than that of said hydrophilic group and almost the same as the surface energy of said fiber surface;

wherein said second portion is oriented toward said fiber surface and said first portion is oriented in a direction different from said fiber surface.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Amended) A fiber, which constitutes an ink absorber applied to a negative pressure producing portion for use in an ink jet apparatus, having a reformed surface with a functional group introduced thereon, wherein the surface of said fiber has a condensate of a polymer fragmented product attached thereon, said condensate being obtained by condensing the polymer fragmented product comprising a second portion having a group of which interfacial energy is almost the same as the surface energy of said fiber surface and a first portion having said functional group in a state where said polymer fragmented product is oriented based on the

affinity to said fiber surface of the group of which interfacial energy is almost the same as the surface energy of said surface, said polymer fragmented product being obtained by subjecting a polymer compound comprising said first portion and said second portion to cleavage.

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Cancelled)

37. (Cancelled)

38. (Cancelled)

39. (Cancelled)

40. (Cancelled)

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Cancelled)

44. (Cancelled)

45. (Amended) A fiber having a hydrophobic surface part of which has been subjected to surface reforming into a hydrophilic surface and constituting an ink absorber which is applied to a negative pressure producing portion for use in an ink jet method, wherein a polymer fragmented product having a hydrophilic group and a hydrophobic group is attached on said hydrophobic surface in such a manner as that said hydrophobic group is oriented toward the

surface of said hydrophobic group and said hydrophilic group is oriented in the direction different from said hydrophobic group, said polymer fragmented product being obtained by subjecting a polymer compound comprising said hydrophilic group and said hydrophobic group to cleavage.

54. (Cancelled)

55. (Cancelled)

56. (Cancelled)

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88. (Cancelled)

89. (Cancelled)

90. (Cancelled)